

XVI. ACCESSIBILITY

STANDARDS AND FINDINGS

B. STANDARDS

The following Americans with Disabilities Act facility review of the Utah State Capitol Building was done based on information provided in 4.1.7 Accessible Buildings, Historic Preservation, of the Americans with Disabilities Act Guidelines (ADAAG) and sections 2.1 through 4.35 were applicable. Section 4.1.7 of the ADAAG covers historic properties in the context of planned renovations for buildings subject to the National Historic Preservation Act. Alterations to such facilities require full compliance with the guidelines unless full compliance would threaten or destroy the historic significance of a feature of the building. The responsibility for determining the historical significance of a feature(s) is placed with the State Historic Preservation Officer or Advisory Council on Historic Preservation. A decision not to comply with a disability access issue during a renovation does not eliminate the possibility that the decision will be challenged.

The Council of American Building Officials/American National Standards Institute (CABO/ANSI A117) and the Uniform Building Code (UBC) which also contain accessibility requirements are enforceable by local building inspectors. Mistakes or omissions are corrected during the design review process conducted by these local officials. The ADA whose requirements are in the Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG) is not enforceable by local building officials and, therefore is omitted from their design review. Lawsuits are seldom filed based upon noncompliance with the CABO/ANSI or the UBC accessibility requirements. On the hand, lawsuits are often filed by individuals or disability rights groups based upon the ADA. It is our goal to ensure compliance with the ADA. The sole reference for this report is the Americans with Disabilities Act Guidelines (ADAAG).

C. FINDINGS

Parking Lot A

Parking Lot A does not provide an accessible route to either the Capitol Building or the State Office Building. An accessible route is defined as a continuous unobstructed path connecting all accessible elements and spaces of a building or facility. Exterior accessible routes may include parking space access aisles, curb ramps, crosswalks at vehicular ways, sidewalks, ramps and lifts.” There can be no steps, no sidewalks with slope greater than 1:20, and no areas along the route that narrows to less than 36” wide. In addition to providing an accessible route from accessible parking to an accessible building entrance, the distance between the two points must also be taken into consideration. Problems start to occur for individuals with disabilities when the distance from the parking area to the building entrance exceeds 100 feet.



PARKING LOT B AND NORTH PLAZA ENTRANCE



SIDEWALK RAMP



PARKING LOT C EAST ENTRANCE



EAST ENTRANCE; BOTTOM OF RAMP



LACK OF WHEELCHAIR SEATING AT EAST ENTRANCE

Parking Lot A is accessed by steps only and is several hundred feet from an accessible entrance to the Capitol Building.

The accessible parking spaces provided in Parking Lot B are too far from the north plaza entrance. Although the North entrance is wheelchair accessible, the distance is estimated to be over 250 feet. When traveling distances are over 100 feet, individuals in wheelchairs or those using canes, crutches or, walkers or those with poor stamina may have to stop and rest for two or three minutes. This can increase a disabled person's exposure to inclement weather (hot or cold) and create periods of severe exhaustion. The picture to your left was not taken from the farthest space, but the traveling distance was estimated from the farthest accessible space.

Sidewalk Ramp From Parking Lot B to East Entrance

The sidewalk ramp from Parking Lot B to Parking Lot C is not properly marked as not being wheelchair accessible. A warning sign is mounted halfway between the top and bottom of this sidewalk but the sign is not visible to individuals approaching from either Parking Lot B or C. Parking Lot B has more accessible parking spaces and is closer to the East entrance than to the North Plaza entrance. An individual parking in Parking Lot C could easily mistake this sidewalk as the accessible route to the East Entrance. Individuals with disabilities will most often go for the shorter distance. If this sidewalk which has a slope that is greater than 1:20 is retained as is, better signs must be installed. If it is used as an accessible route, it must be treated as a sidewalk ramp and handrails and edge protections installed. The majority of accessible parking spaces should be provided in Lot C.

A warning sign is mounted halfway between the top and bottom of this sidewalk ramp indicating that the sidewalk is not considered wheelchair accessible. Individuals approaching the ramp from either Parking Lot B or C can not easily see the sign.

NORTHWEST ENTRANCE ACCESSIBILITY



Parking Lot C/ East Entrance

There are four spaces currently designated as accessible. Of the four spaces, two spaces do not have proper signs. Although the parking lot has a slight slope, a relatively clear accessible route exists from the disabled parking spaces to the East entrance of the Capitol Building. ADAAG 4.1.7(3)(a) and (b), require that only one accessible route and one accessible entrance be provided.

Although we would consider the East entrance as the accessible entrance there are three problems:

- There is no striped loading zone.
- ADAAG 4.8.4(1) requires a level landing area a minimum of 60" deep at the bottom of any ramp. Landings allow an individual in a wheelchair to maneuver so they can approach a ramp straight on. Due to the decorative poles at the bottom of this ramp, a depth of only 41" is provided.
- Wheelchair seating has not been provided on the center landing of the ramp. Wheelchair seating is a requirement when you offer seating to the general public.

SIDEWALK FROM WEST PARKING LOT



NORTH ENTRANCE



Accessible Parallel Parking & Northwest Entrance

The three parallel parking spaces marked accessible located at the Northwest Entrance do not meet any accessible parking space design.

There are 12 additional accessible parking spaces on the west side of the parking garage. Five of these spaces do not have access aisles. These spaces appear to be shared by both Capitol and State Office Building visitors. All these spaces are too far from the Northwest Entrance of the Capitol. Due to the location and general appearance of the Northwest entrance we would not consider this an appropriate accessible entrance. In addition, another sidewalk ramp with a slope greater than 1:20 exists between the parking spaces and the entrance.

Front Lawn

There is no wheelchair access to the front lawn area.



DRINKING FOUNTAIN AT MORMON BATTALION



SEATING FACING VALLEY AT MORMON BATTALION

The Mormon Battalion Monument

There is currently no accessible parking near this monument. The slope of the driveway is too steep for a wheelchair to safely access the monument from Parking

Lot C. The monument consists of five levels. Only the first level is accessible by wheelchair.

Making the Mormon Battalion Monument fully accessible will require very clever solutions to avoid negative impacts to this National Register-listed feature.

If it is determined that major structural changes to provide wheelchair access to all levels of the Mormon Battalion Monument would significantly change the look or historical significance of the monument, focus can be directed to items that would not change the historical nature. Simple but meaningful things like creating an accessible route to the seating area overlooking the valley which is currently not accessible or replacing the non accessible water fountain with an accessible one can easily be accomplished. Along with the list of Battalion members, you might consider providing a miniature or a picture of important features of the monument that are not accessible. Parking spaces or a marked loading zone could also be provided. It is not the intent of the ADA to negatively impact historical sites.

The Edward Harriman Monument

This monument is not accessible. A stepping stone type path has been used instead of a solid surface path. There is plenty of maneuvering and wheelchair seating space around the monument.



MORMON BATTALION MONUMENT



EDWARD HARRIMAN MONUMENT



CHIEF MASSASOIT STATUE

Chief Massasoit Statue

A curb prevents complete wheelchair access to this monument.

The Civil War Monument

There is no access to the sidewalk from the accessible parking spaces. The monument itself is not accessible because two posts block the entrance. The space between and around the posts is less than 32" wide. A wheelchair could not get to the monument without being forced into the grass.

The Constitution Revered Monument

The monument sits out in the middle of a grassy area with no solid surface path from the sidewalk to the monument.

The Daughters of the Utah Pioneers

There is no sidewalk access from the public or accessible parking spaces. The monument itself is not accessible because two marble posts block the entrance. The space between and around the posts is less than 32" wide.

Steps on the South and West Sides

All steps on the west and south sides of the Capitol Building are required to have handrails on both sides of the steps.



CIVIL WAR MONUMENT



THE CONSTITUTION REMEMBERED MONUMENT



DAUGHTERS OF THE UTAH PIONEERS

Restrooms

Due to the extensive structural, mechanical and electrical work planned for Capitol's interior detailed reviews of the restrooms were not done. However, the following general deficiencies found were:

- Incorrect signs
- Doors too heavy
- Insufficient pull or push side clearance at entrance or interior doors
- Lavatory pipes not wrapped
- Intended accessible stalls too small
- Round lavatory hardware
- Paper towel dispensers, mirrors, mounted too high or too hard to use
- Insufficient maneuvering space

If the state decides not to complete the planned work in the restrooms, a more detailed evaluation can be done.



Interior Doors/Rooms

Doors that are recessed do not provide the required 18" of pull side clearance or the 12" of push side clearance. Incorrect room signs are being used.

The 18" of pull side clearance beyond the swing of the door provides space for an individual in a wheelchair or an individual using crutches to get out of the way of the door since neither can step back easily while pulling the door open. The 12" push side clearance provides better access to the door hardware since most individuals in wheelchairs will enter the door at an angle.

Approximately 15 doors have round doorknobs.



Water Fountains

Water fountains that are incorrectly mounted become hazards to those using canes. If not mounted exactly at 27" above the floor to the bottom of the fountain, they do not provide the required knee clearance for those using wheelchairs. We found no water fountains mounted exactly 27" above the floor.

Telephones

There are no signs posted at the telephone banks within the Capitol giving directions to the nearest text telephone (TTY). There is currently a sign at one office entrance but an individual looking for a TTY could easily miss it. A sign must be mounted at each telephone bank consisting of two or more telephones.

Elevators

Both elevators comply with ADA's minimum requirements for elevators in existing or renovated buildings. The elevators meet all other accessibility requirements except for floor numbers on both right and left elevator jams. Currently floor numbers are only on the right jamb.

Gift Shop

In its current configuration, the gift shop does not provide sufficient maneuvering space for a wheelchair. The outside counter is higher than the required maximum height of 36". Although the interior counter was not measured, it appears to be higher than 36" also.

Gallery Seating

Wheelchair seating is provided on one side of the House of Representatives chamber. Companion seating is not provided.



GIFT SHOP



Display

Many displays and written materials throughout the Capitol rotunda and corridors are mounted too high for an individual in a wheelchair to read.

Basement Area

Low hung pipes along the ceiling of the basement are protruding objects. In addition, round doorknobs were being used on at least 12 doors. Restrooms have many of the same issues as restrooms on the other floors.



ALTERNATIVES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

ALTERNATIVES

There are no alternatives regarding the accessibility issues that currently exist at the Capitol. Solutions to the accessibility problems will be covered within individual team responsibilities. The redesigning of the current parking lots will provide accessible parking spaces and accessible routes to the building. Landscaping design changes will provide wheelchair accessible pathways to the front lawn and monument areas. And the electrical and mechanical work will eliminate existing problems with interior fixtures that are currently protruding objects.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. There is a need to clearly define the East Entrance as the intended accessible entrance. This would include using directional signs at site entrances, installing signs on inaccessible entrances, and consolidating accessible parking in sufficient numbers within a reasonable distance from the East Entrance. The decorative poles at the bottom of the access ramp should be removed immediately. This will provide the required 60" deep level landing area. Wheelchair seating can be provided on the center landing of the ramp by relocating the large trash containers.
2. Wheelchair access to the front lawn and monument areas can be accomplished with a series of curb ramps and meandering pathways. If monuments can not be made accessible due to plaque height, brochures with the plaque's text can be made available. If seating areas are provided around the monuments for resting or for viewing the surrounding scenery, then adequate paths and space usable by individuals in wheelchairs must also be provided.
3. In the interior, one problem is lack of wheelchair access to the gift shop. Although not all areas within the gift shop need to be accessible, rearranging merchandise can create a 36" wide path into the gift shop and maneuvering space to exit. At least a 60" long section of the counter should be no higher than 36". A sign offering assistance is also a good idea.
4. Many historical documents are mounted too high for an individual in a wheelchair to read. Text of permanently mounted documents may be offered in a brochure.
5. Many doors have round doorknobs. If the doorknobs have historical value and are on doors not open to the general public, installing signs marked "private" would eliminate any confusion. Public use doors with round doorknobs should be left open during business or social hours. Signs on doors must also include Braille. Many doors do not provide the 18" of strike side clearance on the pull side of the door or the 12" strike side clearance on the push side of the door. Again, "private" signs or signs directing individuals to a central reception would correct this problem.
6. Directional signs with the location of the nearest TTY must be mounted at each phone bank.
7. As mentioned earlier, a detailed review of the restrooms was not done. There are many access issues in all restrooms that must be considered. **Since there are numerous access issues with all the restrooms in the Capitol, it is recommended that all restrooms be demolished and rebuilt to meet ADA requirements.**

